



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KERN COUNTY RESIDENT HELPS TO PREPARE HIS COMMUNITY

Tehachapi Resident Leads Charge for Emergency Preparedness

SACRAMENTO - The Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GO SERV) *Spotlight* features James Nelson, who has spent the past five years establishing a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program in Kern County.

In 1999, Mr. Nelson was one of the first people in his community to volunteer for a CERT train-the-trainer course held by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). After his training, Mr. Nelson began teaching courses and updating materials to address the local community's emergency response needs. He recruited instructors and began a CERT Coordinating Council to manage the program, solicit in-kind donations, and develop grants to keep the program thriving.

Over the past eighteen months, Mr. Nelson provided CERT training to almost 200 people in Bear Valley Springs and assisted with CERT training for an additional 40 people in the communities of Tehachapi and Stallion Springs. Thanks to Mr. Nelson, these small communities have a significant number of trained CERT members, FEMA trained instructors, as well as the equipment and supplies necessary to support the program.

"James is a dedicated CERT volunteer," Executive Director of GO SERV, David Muraki said. "He recognized a need in his community and instead of waiting for someone else, he took the initiative to help prepare himself and Kern County residents for an emergency."

The weekly GO SERV Spotlight recognizes people and programs making a difference in their communities through service and volunteerism. To view the full Spotlight story, visit the GO SERV website at www.goserv.ca.gov. Visitors to the GO SERV site can nominate someone for a Spotlight award and find service opportunities in their community through the Volunteer Match program.

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